

East County Citizens Advisory Board (ECCAB)
Eastern Montgomery Regional Center
3300 Briggs Chaney Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

MEETING SUMMARY

Members Present: Samantha Blizzard, Peter Myo Khin, Jerold Samet, Richard Romer, Kristin McConnell, Elisse Barnes, Kenneth Flemmer, Donald Hague, Jeffrey Bond, Sharon Brown, Christopher Bolton, Curtis Watkins, Fatmata Barrie and Fisseha Adugna

Guests Present: Pat Tyser, Ed Weiler, Dan Wilhem, Craig Wilson, Mark Pharaoh, Mara Parker, Brian Anleu, Vikki Garcia, Robin Riley, Tom Aylward, Patti Ferro, Alicia Jones, Len Newman, Rob Richardson, Tasnura Khan, Chris Burt, Ellie Giles, Camille McKenzie, Marc Elrich, Tom Hucker, Tom Street, Rose Krasnow, Peter Fosselman.

Staff Present: Jewru Bandeh, Linda Cooper

Community attendee(s) were provided the opportunity to raise concerns that they wanted to have addressed at the appropriate time during the meeting. **Dan Wallace** spoke to the need to support the CIP program changes that would allow for needed school renovations. **Peter Fosselman** commented that chances have improved for the funds to be approved for the planned renovation of Hillandale Park. Ed Weiler talked about illegally parked commercial vehicles along Cannon Road, some by fire hydrants.

Approval of the January 3, 2018 Meeting Summary: A motion was made to approve the January 3, 2018 summary (the scheduled February meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather). The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Presentation by Special Guests: **Ellie Giles**, Chief Executive Officer, WorkSource Montgomery, Inc. and **Camille McKenzie**, Manager, WorkSource Montgomery American Job Centers, were present to discuss the WorkSource Montgomery (“WSM”) program’s services with specific focus on East County. Topics of discussion included the following:

- WSM is a public/private partnership founded in July 2016. It is funded through the federal government Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, in addition to county funds, to focus on services matching businesses with job seekers. WSM Job Centers are located in Wheaton and Germantown;
- WSM successes include the awarding of ten grants for 3-year programs at Montgomery College and the University of MD for in-demand industries such as cyber and nursing, a Dept. of Labor grant for disabled workers accessibility, an Aspen Institute grant to address two-generation poverty by working with adults, teen parents, and disconnected youth;

- The Summer Rise career awareness program was put in place last summer to allow rising junior and senior high school students to job shadow at various companies during the summer;
- WSM Job Centers are working to offer certified job training skills for non-college bound job seekers, as well as other skills needed (e.g. resume writing, professional social networking, individualized employment plan) to bridge the gap between youth skills and job requirements; and,
- The Launch Montgomery program was created for young entrepreneurs to connect with a mentor and learn how to prepare and pitch a business plan.
- Establishment of the WSM East County (H.I.R.E.-Helping Individuals Reach Employment) employment center in collaboration with the East County Regional Services Center. The East County HIRE center is located in the East County Regional Services facility.

Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Councilmember At-Large, discussed a range of topics of interest to East County citizens, including:

- Bus Rapid Transit and the need for the County Council to appropriate funds for the use of reversible track on Route 29 south of New Hampshire Avenue;
- The challenges of bringing new businesses to the East County and the need to market the area;
- The disconnection between MCPS graduates and post-secondary education requirements – 60% of MCPS graduates require remedial education at Montgomery College – and the urgency due to the decline in manual labor jobs;
- Debt is constraining the county budget and there is an \$89 million shortfall for funding school growth. Mr. Elrich proposed shifting funds from the Montrose Parkway expansion to schools and other greater needs; and
- The need to make cuts to the county operating budget is concerning given the need to address poverty and its impact on education.

Tom Hucker, Councilmember, District 5, provided updates on several issues/initiatives, including:

- Working with WSM to create a free training program for jobs of the future that do not require a college degree;
- Advocated strongly for funding of East County Capital Improvement projects, including sidewalks on Good Hope Road, the Burtonsville access road and the Hillandale Park renovation, which need to remain priorities in CIP;
- Citizens with a vested interest in the Bus Rapid Transit project need to attend and be heard at the upcoming hearing; and
- EDENS presented a revised plan for Burtonsville Crossing that is much improved over their previous submission.

Questions were posed to the guests, resulting in discussions including but not limited to the following topics:

- Launch Montgomery is not affiliated with any schools; they are reaching out to companies;
- The need for WSM to work with older job seekers and immigrants, particularly training in tech applications and assistance with English for immigrants; and
- The need for more regular maintenance for side streets along Route 29.

ECCAB Sub-Committees Chairs for Planning/Economic Development and Quality of Life Updates: **PED Committee Chair Donald Hague** reported that the PED Committee was given a presentation by Camille McKenzie which expounded on the topics presented at the current meeting. The PED committee participated in the WSM survey designed to identify East County workforce development needs. The Quality of Life Committee is cancelled for March in lieu of the County Council Town Hall Meeting.

Old Business:

A nomination was made and approved to appoint Samantha Blizzard to represent the ECCAB on the North Corridor Advisory Committee for Bus Rapid Transit. There were no volunteers to serve on the Permitting Services Advisory Committee.

The ECCAB letter to the County Executive concerning 2018 Operating Budget Priorities was discussed and approved as is.

New Business: **ECCAB Chair Peter Myo Khin** raised the need for the repaving of Fairland Road.

Adjournment: This meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.